

The Book Club of California

Quarterly

NEWS-LETTER



VOLUME XXXII

WINTER 1966

NUMBER ONE

CASANOVA

The Memoirs and the Man

By Norman V. Carlson

Gallimaufry

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Published for its members by
The Book Club of California, 545 Sutter St.
San Francisco

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CASANOVA: The Memoirs and the Man

By NORMAN V. CARLSON*

JACQUES CASANOVA, baptized Giacomo Giralamo, self-styled Chevalier de Seingalt, died early on the morning of June 4, 1798, at the age of 73 years. At his bedside in the château of Count Joseph Charles de Waldstein at Dux in Bohemia—today Duchkov in Czechoslovakia—were, besides the priest administering last rites, his pet dog Finette and a nephew by marriage, Carlo Angiolini, who had married the daughter of Casanova's youngest sister. No friends, although there were a number of old ones—men and women—who had been concerned about his health; no direct blood relatives, for Francois, the elder brother, who had a deep affection for Jacques, was in Vienna; and Count Waldstein, who had employed Casanova as his resident librarian since 1785, was absent from his manor. Apparently a grave bladder complication following upon gout and prostate difficulties, which had seriously troubled him for about six months, was the cause of Casanova's death. It was bitter solitude for this remarkable man whose kaleidoscopic life had left an extravagant trail across 18th century Europe; a trail which at the moment of his death had been but a meteoric flash, but which in the course of years would achieve a permanence far greater than what his dying thoughts could have imagined, and hardly to be equalled by any of his more illustrious contemporaries.

As someone put it, Casanova was "hopelessly dead." It mattered little that the mortuary records blundered in both the spelling of his name and his age at death, and that it was only in 1922 that a

*Norman V. Carlson is President of the Photo & Sound Company, San Francisco. This address was originally delivered at a meeting of the Roxburghe Club on March 15, 1966.

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grave marker was found, again with an error, but at least testifying to the fact that somewhere in the château's graveyard, space—never identified—had been set aside for his remains.

In later years more appreciative souls placed a memorial tablet on the outside walls of the chapel at Dux bearing the simple inscription: JAKOB CASANOVA / VENEDIG 1725 / DUX 1798.

Casanova was a tireless and voluminous scribbler; he had a compelling desire to write, motivated undoubtedly by the same prodigious vitality that characterized every action in his tempestuous, impetuous life. There are many references in the *Memoirs* to his note-making and record-keeping, hurried at times and on other occasions more formalized and detailed, perhaps in journal form. He was a prolific correspondent. And on most any pretext he would dash off verses, prepare petitions and pamphlets, and compose observations of one sort or another. Whenever time permitted his first concern was for writing materials, and wherever he went he carted quantities of papers, documents and notebooks. As early as 1742, when only 17, he was depositing with a friend a large bundle of personal papers which, in this case, he did not retrieve until 15 years later. He rarely disposed of correspondence, either letters received or copies of letters sent. That this was the case is borne out principally by correlative evidence, the greater number of remaining examples being from his later years.

Few are aware of the extent of Casanova's literary productions. Over a span of 46 years, from 1752 to 1797, he had published 24 works that can be verified, ranging from mere pamphlets—and at times he was close to being a professional pamphleteer—to a five-volume utopian romance, and including the beginnings of a monthly review and a weekly journal of dramatic criticism. These, along with unpublished manuscript material, attest to the catholicity of his interests and erudition; poetry, drama, translations (from French and Greek into Italian), philosophy, history, science, mathematics—no subject seemed to escape his encyclopedic mind. In 1789 Casanova wrote that "forty-two volumes of my works have demonstrated to Italy that I am not a frog in the morass of Apollo." All of this in spite of a life almost exclusively devoted to travel, adventure and other non-literary pursuits.

Some ten years before his death, Casanova transferred to Count Waldstein ownership in all his papers. Since it is evident this did

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not include the manuscript of the *Memoirs*, it can be assumed that this sale or bequest excluded his writings after 1788. In 1871 a visitor at Dux reported that these literary remains consisted of heaps of disarranged manuscript material in a cupboard cared for by servants. It was customary for these same servants to give away or to sell sheets of Casanova manuscript to persons visiting the Dux library. There is no way of estimating how much disappeared in this manner. Arthur Symons visited the château in 1899 and there found "six huge cardboard cases, large enough to contain foolscap paper, arranged so as to stand like books; they opened at the side; and on opening them, one after another, I found series after series of manuscripts roughly thrown together, after some pretence at arrangement, and lettered with a very generalized description of contents."

After World War I the château of Dux was acquired by the Municipality of the town and Count Waldstein transferred his library, presumably including the Casanova manuscripts (said to comprise some 8,000 pieces) to Hirschberg in Czechoslovakia, where they subsequently became State property and are now in the State Archives near Prague.

All of the works published by Casanova prior to his death, as interesting as they are today from a collector's point of view, are very dull reading indeed, and so it must have been at the time of publication, for with one notable exception ("The Story of My Escape from The Leads") none seems to have sold much beyond original subscribers' lists, if even these. All together they could not possibly have saved Casanova from the oblivion of the churchyard at Dux. Only what occurred posthumously did this.

Sometime during the latter part of 1789 Casanova began writing the story of his life, and he was still at it when he died in 1798. Disappointed by the public's indifference to works he had thought would ensure his immortality, and finally accepting that life held for him no more than the tedious, detested existence that had closed in on him at Dux, Casanova, as might be expected, again resorted to pen and paper to occupy and amuse himself. Although little evidence remains, it is accepted that Casanova must have, in the main, transcribed from notes. He wrote for hours on end and with great speed, a first draft being completed by 1792. Then, as was his custom, there were revisions and redraftings until he could write no more.

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Although the title of the manuscript reads "The History of My Life Until the Year 1797," the *Memoirs* end abruptly in 1774, on the eve of Casanova's return to Venice after an involuntary exile of 18 years. A great deal has been written about Casanova's real intent in this respect: whether or not the abrupt ending and the confusion he himself left in correspondence as to the number of volumes written or planned, indicate there was more to come. Aside from conjecture, some of it very well put, it would seem that Casanova actually brought his *Memoirs* to a close in 1774 and that they consisted of the volumes as we now know them.

In spite of Casanova's frequent protests that what he was writing was strictly for his own pleasure, that both embarrassing truths and painful revelations made publication—certainly in his lifetime—an impossibility, the encouragement of friends who had had the opportunity of reading parts influenced Casanova, and in April 1797 he sent a copy of a preface to Count Marcolini, Prime Minister of Saxony, proposing publication. Nothing came of this, probably because Marcolini thought the text would be too indiscreet. It is possible Casanova made other essays toward publication; if so, there is, however, no authenticated record. A little more than a year following this attempt, Casanova was dead.

And dead and forgotten he remained for almost a quarter of a century.

On December 13, 1820, the German publisher F. A. Brockhaus in Leipzig was approached by an agent offering for sale the manuscript *Histoire de Ma Vie Jusqu'a l'An 1797* by Jacques Casanova, then owned by Carlo Angiolini, a direct descendant of the memorialist. This Carlo was the son of the Carlo who had attended Casanova during his last hours, and it is assumed that the manuscript became his at that time, although by what means is not known. Brockhaus learned, too, that prior to his death in 1814, Count Marcolini had reconsidered his refusal to publish Casanova's *Memoirs* and had offered 2,500 thalers for the manuscript. Angiolini, for whatever reason, rejected the offer.

Brockhaus was skeptical, of course. The name Casanova meant nothing to him and no doubt more than one spurious 18th century manuscript had crossed his desk. He insisted on dealing directly with the principal, and soon had the manuscript for examination.

It consisted of 600 or more folio pages written on both sides, of

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30 lines per page, and of 12 words per line, reportedly made up into 12 bundles representing 12 volumes. At this point it is appropriate to point out an inconsistency. When in 1899 Arthur Symons was shown at Leipzig the original manuscript he reported it "written on foolscap paper, rather rough and yellow," whereas Octave Uzanne, who examined it in 1906 and 1914, commented that "the Holland is milk white." Also, Brockhaus discovered at this time that Chapters 4 and 5 of Volume XII were missing.

Convinced of the genuineness of the manuscript, Brockhaus agreed to purchase and in January 1821 Angiolini transferred to Brockhaus the manuscript *Histoire de Ma Vie*, along with the manuscripts of three minor essays. It was not until a few years ago that the sale price was disclosed: 200 thalers.

Not only had eminent critics recommended purchase, they also suggested that it be published without delay. Brockhaus selected Wilhelm von Schutz to prepare a German translation of the French text as originally written by the Italian adventurer. Something had to be lost in such a translation.

Although Casanova had published his "Escape from the Leads" in 1788, and had included personal recollections in such of his works as *A Leonard Snetlage* in 1797, and although the Prince Charles de Ligne in his "Fragment Sur Casanova" in 1807 had quoted what appeared to be excerpts from some form of the *Memoirs* as furnished him by Casanova, the first appearance in print of the *Memoirs* as they have come down to us was in the form of several episodes in *Urania*, a literary review of the Brockhaus firm, published in 1822. Almost simultaneously the first volume of the von Schutz edition appeared, the final or XIIth volume not being issued until 1828. An unnamed translator took over from von Schutz beginning with the VIth volume. This, then, can be considered the First Edition of the complete *Memoirs*, possibly the most ignored of all editions. As conscientious as this translation was, it suffered, as all subsequent editions have, from being expurgated.

Because of the instant success of this German edition, a French publisher, Tournachon-Molin, exercising a de facto privilege that existed before copyright laws, brought out a pirated French translation of the German translation in 14 volumes between 1825 and 1829. Though this was in fact the first French edition it was not the

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first French edition of the French text. It was subjected to further pruning, and far worse, text was added that was not Casanova's, a liberty frequently taken at later dates.

The first appearance of Casanova in English was a series of extracts from his "Escape from the Leads" published by *The London Magazine* in 1826.

Disturbed and smarting financially from the pirated French edition, Brockhaus decided to publish an authorized French edition, the editing of which he entrusted to Jean Laforgue, a professor of French literature in Dresden. Twelve volumes appeared between 1826 and 1838, the first four by 1827 under the name of Brockhaus in Leipzig, the next four in 1832 under the name of Heideloff et Campé, Paris, and the final four in 1838 without benefit of publisher's name but showing place of publication as Brussels, though actually printed in Leipzig. Brockhaus had run into censorship difficulties, first from the German printers' guild and then, presumably, from the French authorities.

The Laforgue text, because of its completeness and high literary standards, became the principal source of all future editions and translations. Laforgue was given the task of converting Casanova's italianisms into more correct and readable French, and to further expurgate whenever in his opinion Casanova's tell-all candor proved too licentious.

In many ways today's *Memoirs* are the words of Laforgue and not of Casanova, and there are critics who go so far as to attribute any literary merit to the editor rather than to the author. The full extent of Laforgue's expurgations and embellishments is yet to be determined. He was an ardent French republican and as such had only antipathy for the *ancien regime* and Catholic clericalism, particularly Jesuitry. Whenever it was seemingly propitious to twist the words or meaning of Casanova to express his personal repugnancies, he did so—and in many instances these twistings meant shortened or added text. Casanova was a royalist, if anything, and had but little sympathy for, though a full appreciation of, the revolutionary holocaust that was to engulf France; and in his own way he was a Catholic Christian, perhaps as good a Catholic as a free-thinker of his day could be. (It is reported that Casanova's last words were: "I have lived as a philosopher and die as a Christian.")

It would be too lengthy to recite examples of comparative texts

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in order to point up Laforgue's inexcusable propensity to convert Casanova's words into support of his beliefs, but one is needed to point up an obvious instance of adulteration:

One of the more interesting historical episodes in the *Memoirs* is the account of Damiens' attempt on the life of Louis XV and of the execution which followed. I will first give excerpts from the true text and then as Laforgue edited them.

C. "Some days later, it was the 28th of March, I went at an early hour to fetch the ladies . . ."

L. "On March the 28th, the day of Damiens' martyrdom, I went to fetch the ladies in good time . . ."

C. "We had the perseverance to stay four full hours at this horrible spectacle. I will not give any details, because I would be too long, and besides they are known to everyone."

L. "We had the courage to watch the dreadful sight for four hours. The circumstances of Damiens' execution are too well known to render it necessary for me to speak of them; indeed, the account would be too long a one, and in my opinion such horrors are an offense to our common humanity."

C. "Damiens was a fanatic who had attempted to kill Louis XV believing to do a good deed. He had only grazed his skin, but to the people it was the same thing as if he had succeeded. Those people present at his execution called him a monster that had been vomited up from Hell to assassinate the best of kings whom they believed they adored, and whom they called the Well-Beloved. They were nevertheless the same people who massacred all of the royal family, all the nobility of France, and all those who had given to the nation the fine character which made it esteemed, loved, and taken even as a model by all the others. The people of France, said M. de Voltaire himself, are the most abominable of all peoples. They are like the chameleon which takes on all colors, and which is susceptible to all that a leader wishes it to do for good or for evil."

L. "Damiens was a fanatic, who, with the idea of doing a good work and obtaining a heavenly reward, had tried

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to assassinate Louis XV: and though the attempt was a failure, and he only gave the king a slight wound, he was torn to pieces as if his crime had been consummated."

C. "At the execution of Damiens . . ."

L. "While the victim of the Jesuits was being executed . . ."

There are many such examples, and to accomplish his purpose it is supposed Laforgue not only expurgated and altered but also added textual material entirely from whole cloth. It is possible the extent of this may prove far greater than has been supposed.*

As an example to show another side of Laforgue, I ran across an instance where Casanova in fulminating against "money-lenders" as a class—and no one was better qualified to do this—was made to say "Jewish money-lenders" by Laforgue.

Again, as has been so often assumed, Laforgue found Casanova's amatory dalliances both unchaste and too explicit, and therefore he veiled in 19th century prose—incidentally, very good prose—what had not been at all objectionable in the 18th. The importance of this can best be imagined when it is realized that Casanova's love affairs take up about one-third of the *Memoirs*.

About this time Brockhaus shut the door on any future definitive editions of the *Memoirs*, making it known that the integral text never would be published, a resolve that held good until 1960.

Whether or not von Schutz and Laforgue worked from the original manuscript is difficult to determine at this late date, but evidence indicates they did. It was admitted early by the Brockhaus firm that Laforgue had not returned all of the manuscript, that Chapter 4 of Volume VIII had disappeared. Furthermore, in 1925 an article appeared in the *Gazette de France* claiming Brockhaus had made the statement that there were originally three manuscripts of the *Memoirs* and that the two loaned to von Schutz and Laforgue had not been returned. All of this may have a bearing on what follows.

It seems that with almost every edition of the *Memoirs* a mystery is uncovered. In 1829 the firm of Schubart et Heideloff, Paris, pub-

*These observations, it must be pointed out, are those of the "experts," not of the writer. It is possible that von Schutz had one manuscript, Laforgue another, and that the recent Brockhaus edition is that of still a third. If this is the case—and there is evidence to this effect—then Laforgue's so-called "adulterations" may be true textual variations and not pure fiction.

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lished the first two (and only) volumes of a proposed eight-volume edition which claimed to be according to the original manuscript of Casanova "brought down to the year 1782." Since these volumes were merely transcripts of the Laforgue text, and because of other evidence, it would seem the date 1782 was an obvious error—perhaps as a lure to subscribers. Furthermore, though Heideloff suspended this publication after the second volume, his name appears on the title pages of Volumes V to VIII of the Brockhaus-Laforgue edition which were issued in 1832; indicating, perhaps, that Brockhaus had a hand in bringing about the suspension.

Nevertheless, this abortive French piracy presented an unsolved mystery. Whereas both von Schutz and Laforgue use initials only to identify two names which appear in the *Memoirs*, those of the Marquise Gabrielli and Mme. Favorini (Foscarini), they are spelled out in this 1829 edition. From what source did Heideloff obtain these spellings? Certainly not from the Brockhaus manuscript.

In 1833 a Paris publisher, Paulin, decided to profit from the Brockhaus success by issuing a pirated reprint starting with the eight volumes of the Laforgue edition that had appeared up to 1832. But when Brockhaus held up further publication because of the censorship problems he had run into, Paulin found himself without copy to finish his project and in difficulties with his subscribers. Be that as it may, in 1837 two additional and final volumes appeared bearing Paulin's imprint as well as the editor's name, Philippe Busoni. When subsequently the last four volumes of the Laforgue edition came out a year later, it was immediately apparent that they differed substantially from the Paulin-Busoni final volumes, for episodes in the Laforgue version were missing from that of Paulin, and the latter contained episodes not appearing in either Laforgue or von Schutz. Of even greater mystery were details—later authenticated—that were published by Paulin but not by Laforgue. No satisfactory explanation has been developed, although the best so far is that Laforgue had in his employ a copyist who surreptitiously aided Paulin. Needless to say, both Paulin and Busoni declined to divulge the source of their controversial text.

It contained hiatuses, transitional interpolations, and out-and-out spurious material that could be readily identified and in a sense explained by reasonable conjecture. But where the Paulin text accurately supplements a briefer Laforgue text, or where the Paulin

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text furnishes facts later verified which do not appear in either Laforge or von Schutz—these pose rather interesting questions. I will illustrate this with an example.

In 1767, while at Spa, Casanova met a shady acquaintance of his, who was then going under the name of the Marquis Antoine della Croce, who had with him a young Brussels girl of gentle birth by the name of Charlotte, whom he had seduced. Della Croce abandoned his pregnant inamorata to Casanova who in turn carried her to Paris where he arranged for the delivery of her child and the placing of it in a foundlings' home. In the *Memoirs* Casanova quotes the official certificate of baptism in which he gives the name of the father as Della Croce and that of the mother as Charlotte X X X. Both the von Schutz and Laforge editions so identify her, but the Paulin text gives her name as Charlotte de L. X X X.

Casanova had added that if his reader was curious of knowing the name of the mother he had afforded a means of satisfying his curiosity. The researchers pounced on this, but without success, so the episode was put down as another of Casanova's flights of imagination. But a more persistent Casanovist in 1894 ascertained the truth of Casanova's account when he found that Della Croce's name had been transformed in the records into a French equivalent, Lacrosse. And there for all to see, as Casanova had said, was the mother's name in full, Charlotte Lamotte. (It is to be noted that Casanova also had quoted the record of the foundling hospital, but in that, in the original manuscript, he had given the father's name as Lacrosse—actually the clue he referred to—but Laforge in his zealousness corrected it to Della Croce thereby delaying identification.)

The real significance of all this comes from a comparison with the original text which agrees with the von Schutz and Laforge editions: in all three the mother's name is given as Charlotte X X X. Then how did Paulin-Busoni stumble on to the correct identification of Charlotte de L. X X X? From what source? It is of further interest to note that whereas the French archives give Charlotte's family name without the "de"—which was customary in cases of unwed mothers—Paulin with a more precise identification includes it. Bear in mind that the results of subsequent research were not available to Paulin in 1837.

The first appearance of Casanova in the United States was in

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Waldie's Select Circulating Library, Philadelphia, 1834, which published an extract of Casanova's "Escape from The Leads."

In 1860 Rosez, a Brussels publisher, issued a reprint in six volumes of the Paulin-Busoni edition. It served little purpose other than to perpetuate the earlier piracy and to make more permanent the questionable text. Because of this, the important Paulin variant publication is usually referred to as the Paulin-Busoni-Rosez edition, or more simply as the Rosez edition.

H. Neuhoff & Co. in 1863 brought out the first appearance of the *Memoirs* in English, but printed in Germany. It was incomplete.

Nile C. Smith in Chicago printed *The Love Adventures of J. Casanova* in 1890, a book of 268 pages, to make it the first publication in the United States of extracts from the *Memoirs*.

Then in 1894 the first Arthur Machen translation appeared in a twelve-volume edition privately printed by H. S. Nichols, London. A later edition of the Machen translation was published by The Casanova Society in 1922 and contained for the first time in English the two missing chapters found by Arthur Symons in 1899 at Dux. This is worthy of a comment. These are Symons' words: "Just here I may mention my own most important discovery at Dux; that is to say, a manuscript entitled 'Extrait du Chapitre 4 et 5' . . . It is curious that this very important document, which supplies the one missing link in the *Memoirs*, should never have been discovered by any of the few people who have had the opportunity of looking over the Dux manuscripts." Although this was written in 1922 and repeated in 1925, it seems that Symons did not know of or overlooked the fact that the missing chapters had been discovered in 1884 and that Octave Uzanne had published them in a French review in 1906.

Perhaps this is a good time to discuss the missing chapters.

In 1884 there was found at Dux a notebook consisting of six double leaves, or twenty-four pages, of which twenty-two were in manuscript, the last two pages being blank. These pages were numbered 102 to 118 and 143 to 148, there being no textual break however between 118 and 143. At the top of 143 Casanova had written—in Latin—"twenty-four pages removed." It is interesting to note that in the Brockhaus manuscript Chapter 3 ends on p. 92 and Chapter 6 begins on p. 149. At some stage Casanova apparently decided to suppress Chapters 4 and 5, because beside the page number 149 in the original manuscript he had written "93." It is

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likely that much later he again changed his mind, intending to reinstate the text which he had drafted as an "extrait" in the notebook found at Dux, but death prevented him from doing this.

It would be tiresome to dwell too long on the various editions of the *Memoirs*. Suffice to say they have been published in twenty-four languages, by far the larger number being in German, for it remained to German scholars to show the first and greatest interest and do the earliest research in the life of Casanova. No Italian edition appeared before 1882, not only because the Italians were slow to appreciate the Venetian who was to take his place alongside another famous Venetian, Marco Polo, but because the *Memoirs* were placed on the Papal Index in 1834. As far as I know they are still there.

However, two further editions must be discussed.

From 1924 to 1935 the La Sirène edition, under the exceedingly capable editorship of Raoul Vèze, was published in Paris in twelve volumes. It was definitive, containing extensive notes contributed by all the great Casanovists, a comparison of existing variant texts, and an array of scholarly introductions to each volume. Although lacking the integral text, and based entirely on that of Laforgue, it will long remain an essential source-book to Casanova scholars. Arthur Machen did a masterly translation of the Sirène notes to be incorporated in the Limited Editions Club eight-volume set published in 1940.

Finally, in 1960, the German publishing firm of F. A. Brockhaus, now of Wiesbaden—having been bombed out of Leipzig—announced "*Un événement que le monde littéraire attend depuis 140 ans,*" the publication of the integral text of Casanova's *Memoirs: Histoire de Ma Vie*. Why did Brockhaus hold up publication of the original manuscript for 140 years after it had been purchased? There is no conclusive answer to this—even the present Brockhaus firm only speculates. It is likely that the early difficulties with the book publishers' guild in Leipzig were the determining factor: "that such a publication was not worthy of a German publisher." This decision was not questioned by the heirs of the founder until just following World War I when publication was seriously considered for the first time. Because of the imminent and definitive Sirène edition, Brockhaus delayed theirs until 1960.

With the publication of the integral text in 1960 to 1964—con-

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sisting of six tomes of two volumes each—Brockhaus offered some added information concerning the manuscript. Apparently as received from Carlo Angiolini in 1821, and presumably as it came from Casanova himself, the manuscript was divided into ten unequal volumes. The assumption here is that the division into twelve was a determination by the original Brockhaus, von Schutz, and the literary experts at the time.

Also, in addition to the missing Chapters 4 and 5 of Volume XII, there were seven chapters in the text—Chapters 7 to 12 of Volume III, and Chapter 3 of Volume IX—where Casanova had prepared alternate readings, one having more details than the other.

Whereas it had been previously reported that Laforgue had failed to return Chapter 4 of Volume VIII of the original manuscript, in 1960 Brockhaus announced that the “lost” portions actually consisted of the first four chapters of Volume VIII.

In publishing the original text Brockhaus decided to make no changes other than to modernize spelling and punctuation, to follow the scheme of twelve volumes rather than ten, to incorporate the more detailed of the variant readings (which, unfortunately, was not done), to include the extracts of the missing two chapters, to use the Laforgue text for the chapters he had not returned, and to update and add to the Sirène notes.

In addition Brockhaus proposed to publish a facsimile edition of the manuscript in its existing state, but as late as a year ago there were not a sufficient number of subscribers to make this possible.

I do not know if anyone has gone beyond the limited textual comparisons of the Sirène edition now that the integral text is available. I suspect that something of this sort will be forthcoming, but undoubtedly in the original French. Whether or not any English translation of the Brockhaus edition is contemplated I cannot say.

There have been many illustrated editions of the *Memoirs*, with the French outnumbering but not necessarily outclassing all others. I will describe only one because of its uniqueness.

In 1875 Rosez, the Brussels publisher, commissioned Jules-Adolphe Chauvet to illustrate the *Memoirs*. He submitted 279 designs of which 102 were selected and made into engravings by one Barraud. These were subsequently used by Rosez in several editions. The 177 rejects—suppressed mostly because they were entirely too free—apparently did not get into circulation.

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Sometime in 1946, Maurice Sloog, a bookdealer in New York, was called on by the U.S. Customs to examine a set of books they had seized from a military man returning from service in Europe. Sloog recognized in them a unique and very valuable set of the *Memoirs*, and so advised the Customs. What disposition was made of the set Sloog learned only nine years later when J. Rives Childs, the leading American Casanovist, as well as bibliographer and biographer of Casanova, called on him after a research stint at the Library of Congress. Sloog, knowing of Childs' interest in Casanova, told him of the occurrence in 1946 to which Childs was able to add that this particular set of the *Memoirs* was then in the Library in Washington.

Apparently the set had been purchased from a well-known Brussels bookdealer by a U.S. Naval officer, so it probably was not war loot. If it had been so identified the U.S. Government would have made an attempt to return it to the rightful owner. However, when it was confiscated the military man—I do not know if he was the "U.S. Naval officer"—was unable to produce evidence of ownership and refused to explain how he had come to possess the books. They are now in the Rare Book Division of the Library of Congress.

Last year I examined the set. It is in eight volumes, octavo, beautifully bound in red morocco and signed by the bookbinder Allo. The first five volumes are made up of printed text from the Rosez edition of 1872, which was the Paulin-Busoni pirated text. The last three volumes, consisting of 573, 497 and 543 pages respectively, although matching imperfectly the first five, are in fine original manuscript—neat and impeccable—instead of in printed text. I did not make any textual analysis of the manuscript portion, but Childs had done so and reported that it was made up of Busoni and Laforgue text as well as of "spurious" material.

It was illustrated not only with the 102 original drawings of Chauvet together with the trial proofs and from three to five states of the Barraud engravings, but also with the 177 rejected drawings, making a total of 279 designs, the full number commissioned of Chauvet in 1875. It is a most valuable set, indeed, and for once confiscation by the Customs did not lead to destruction. Even so, there has been no explanation from the Rare Book Division as to how the set had come into its possession.

So ends a somewhat haphazard survey of Casanova's *Memoirs*,

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one of the most delightful books in the world and almost the exclusive source of our knowledge of a very unusual man, for without them Casanova would have rested unknown and unremembered in the private churchyard at Dux.

I have given you the *Memoirs*—the man has gone begging; but time has run out on me. It did on Casanova, too, only his legacy, as Lawrence Clark Powell put it: “. . . is generally conceded to be the greatest autobiography ever written. More human than St. Augustine, more truthful than Cellini, more complex and dramatic than Pepys, less prosaic than Evelyn, more objective than Rousseau, Casanova’s *Memoirs* furnish not only the myriad details of his dynamic life, but also a masterful description of the century in which he lived, the habits of chamber-maids and queens, coachmen and kings, the conversations of poets and philosophers and the personal appearance of almost every person of international renown.”

* * *

Gallimaufry

WHEN WE were first editor of the *News-Letter* we entitled this department “Serendipity”—at that time not a very common word. Nowadays it has become a “smart” word; everywhere, it seems, we find “The Serendipity Shoe Shop,” “The Serendipity This, That and The Other.” And so your editor has decided to change the name of this department.

“Gallimaufry” was originally a culinary term for a dish of odds and ends, a hodge-podge, a word borrowed from the French and much loved by Tudor England who used it in a metaphysical sense. Hence it has come to mean a heterogeneous mixture. Ed.

IT IS with great pleasure that we welcome a brother book club on the Pacific Coast. We have received news from Vancouver, B. C. of the founding of *The Alcuin Society*, established by a group of bookmen, collectors and librarians in the area. The Society plans to publish limited editions from time to time, mainly of Canadian interest. Indeed, its first book is going to press at this writing. It is entitled *A Theatrical Trip for a Wager! Through Canada and the United States*. (\$18.50 pre-subscription price: \$20.00 on publication.)

Membership in the Society is limited to 875. Regular \$10.00, Sustaining \$25.00, Patron \$100.00. The cost of a Life Membership is \$750.00. The address of *The Alcuin Society* is: 1181 Seymour Street, Vancouver 2, B. C.

The Book Club of California

H. RICHARD ARCHER, Custodian of the Chapin Library at Williams College, has sent the Club *An Abecedarium of Printers (1460-1964)*. This attractive folder is a brief handlist issued in connection with an exhibit at the Library that featured books from its collection printed or designed by sixty famous printers or typographers. They are listed alphabetically, from Aldus to Zapf—hence the title. Californians represented in this distinguished company include the Allen Press, Brother Antoninus, the Grabhorn Press, and Adrian Wilson. Mr. Archer advises us that copies of the *Abecedarium* are available gratis to Book Club members as long as the supply lasts. Requests should be addressed to him at the Chapin Library, Williams College, Williamstown, Mass. 01267.

THE HUNT BOTANICAL LIBRARY has just published a new edition and English translation of Walahfrid Strabo's *Hortulus*, one of the earliest known accounts of medieval gardening and plants. The edition is attractively illustrated with 28 linoleum-cut page decorations by Henry Evans of San Francisco.

The ninth-century manuscript reproduced here for the first time was made available by the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, in Rome. Its transcription and English translation on facing pages, by Raef Payne of Eton College, is preceded by a biographical account of the Benedictine monk by Wilfrid Blunt. The volume provides also a bibliographical study of the previous editions, an account of the plants mentioned or described in the poem, and a listing of references on the subject.

The edition is of 1500 copies, printed on rag paper, in Romulus type, by Enschede en Zonen of Haarlem, and is bound in simulated vellum with Carolingian spine-lettering in gold leaf, designed by Arnold Bank. The original linoleum cuts are printed in green by photo-offset, overprinted with black text. Copies may be ordered from The Hunt Botanical Library, Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, Penna., 15213, for \$12.00, postpaid. San Franciscans, and visitors to the city, may see copies at Mr. Evans' new gallery and printshop, located at 555 Sutter Street.

Notes on Publications

THE BOOK CLUB OF CALIFORNIA is proud to announce a handsome and unusual Christmas publication.

The Great Polyglot Bibles is unusual because of its text, its accompanying leaf from a 16th-century Bible that is a typographic and theological landmark, and, finally, because of its own format and manner of printing.

The text by the Reverend Professor Basil Hall, Lecturer in Ecclesiastical History at Cambridge University, is a scholarly account of the back-

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ground of Bibles published during the Renaissance with the same text appearing on each page in several ancient languages. The author also discusses the printing history and the typography of these volumes.

The page inserted in each copy of the Club edition is printed in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin types, and is from the first polyglot Bible, known as the Complutensian, issued from Spain in 1517.

Finally, this is the first Club publication to be produced entirely on a handpress, except for minor contributions to earlier keepsakes. Lewis and Dorothy Allen have created at their Allen Press a folio, 15 by 10½ inches, of unsewn folded sheets enclosed in a heavy handmade paper, further encased in a hinged box covered by a cloth specially made for this edition. The work is printed on dampened all-rag paper with two or three colors on each page and with many reproductions of relevant woodcuts. The general design of the work, including type-faces, decorations, and color, is intended to give the feeling of early 16th-century Spanish books.

Because of the amount of hand work involved, this edition had to be limited to 400 copies. Each is priced at \$47.50, plus 4% sales tax to California residents. This unusual and lavish limited edition is expected to sell out soon, so members who do not have standing orders are urged to order promptly.

Elected to Membership

The following have been elected since the publication of the Fall *News-Letter*:

<i>Member</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Sponsor</i>
Dr. & Mrs. James R. Allen	Burlingame	Lewis Allen
Egon Birkenfeld	Berkeley	Membership Committee
Dr. Ralph Bookman	Los Angeles	Robert N. Gold
Mabel E. Chorley	Sacramento	Mrs. Clark Lee
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Paul M. Erickson	San Francisco	Warren R. Howell
E. W. Hourcade	Oakland	Membership Committee
Theodore Koundakjian	Berkeley	John Swingle
Stewart N. McGaw	Stockton	George Leistner
Dorothy M. Munro	San Anselmo	Membership Committee
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Grant K. Smith	Bolinas	Warren R. Howell
Mrs. Thomas C. Tellefsen	Woodside	John Swingle
Mr. & Mrs. Garrett J. Troff	Kalamazoo	Membership Committee
Mrs. Donald E. Van Luven	San Jacinto	Membership Committee
University of California	Irvine	Membership Committee

The Book Club of California

NEW SUSTAINING MEMBERS

The two classifications of membership above Regular Membership are Patron Memberships, \$100 a year, and Sustaining Memberships, \$25 a year. The following have entered the Club as Sustaining Members:

Egon Birkenfeld	Berkeley
Dr. Ralph Bookman	Los Angeles
E. W. Hourcade	Oakland
Dorothy M. Munro	San Anselmo
Grant K. Smith	Bolinas

Exhibitions

DURING DECEMBER and January the Club will feature an exhibit devoted to notable Bibles, in honor of the Christmas publication, *The Great Polyglot Bibles*.

Book Reviews

OSCAR LEWIS, *San Francisco: From Mission to Metropolis*. Howell-North Press, Berkeley, 1966. 274 pp. \$6.95.

Authors who have toyed with the idea of writing an adequate and up-to-date, single-volume, history of San Francisco are, surely, in battalion strength around our fair city. But toying and talking do not equal writing. Only one man has had the grit to tackle the job and that means the Club's "resident historian," Oscar Lewis. Guidebooks to Greater Yerba Buena are a farthing the gross but histories of the City, at least those directed to an adult audience, have been virtually non-existent except in the bins of such bibliopoles as Magee, Howell, Haines and Wreden.

Oscar's book is *San Francisco: From Mission to Metropolis*. The volume may disappoint some aficionados of 'Frisco by not covering—or better, not uncovering—*every* character, incident and choice morsel of historic gossip in the City's past. But, with less than 300 pages at his disposal, and most of them hung with one or more of the 154 illustrations between the boards, the author has done wonders.

My own complaint is irrational. I would prefer more Oscar and less Kodak. (But then we would not have an extra-illustrated history of the City, which we certainly have long needed.) Too, there is a certain text-bookish appearance to even the best of these photo-histories and a consequent de-personalization of the prose involved.

However, any of us who have to grapple, personally, with the prob-

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lems of organization and writing of books will appreciate Oscar Lewis's skill in handling this story-ridden city in such brief space. We applaud Oscar's success in dealing so effectively with a topic which has thwarted most of the rest of us.

RICHARD DILLON

GEORGE W. GROH, *Gold Fever, Being a True Account, Both Horrifying and Hilarious, of the Art of Healing (So-Called) During the California Gold Rush*. William Morrow and Company, New York, 1966, 340 pp. \$6.00.

This is an interesting and easy bit of reading about a lot of lusty living during the great Gold Rush to San Francisco. It is a vigorous account of some of the 1500 physicians, fake or true, who were in the Rush, and who represented some of the best and some of the worst of contemporary medicine. There were many surgeons and many irregular practitioners. None had the benefit of modern knowledge of anesthetics, infectious disease, sterilization, or even sanitation. They formed a motley crew; the account of their adventures and their misadventures is an exciting and authoritative one. There are excellent notes, a helpful bibliography, and a very good index.

The account is based upon contemporary letters, newspaper accounts and diaries, as well as upon various later analyses of what transpired. Most of the really worthy contributors to the medical story of early California are mentioned, except, surprisingly, James Blake (1815-1893), a distinguished English chemist and surgeon who came overland from St. Louis in 1850, practicing skillfully in Sacramento and trying to bring some semblance of scientific medicine to the Far West. It was Blake who aided in the development of the California Academy of Sciences and who introduced the open air-rest treatment for tuberculosis. This followed his pioneer scientific study of the relationship of the chemical constitution of drugs and their biological activity.

The more colorful physicians are described, such as Dr. R. Beverly (King) Cole, and the South Carolinian surgeon Dr. Hugh H. Toland, who vigorously opposed each other in many professional affairs, but who finally worked together in what later became the University of California Medical School.

Many of the early physicians wrote excellent accounts of the climate and state of affairs in California and some of them were widely circulated. The early conditions were uniformly rigorous and terrifying, with epidemics of cholera, poor food, almost impossible living conditions, and with the single redeeming feature of a gentle climate.

Solid medical work in California could hardly begin until some degree of stability had become established. This occurred with the publishing

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of the *California Medical Journal* in 1856, which however ran for only a single volume. It was a good try and led to the development of the California Medical Society and the publication of several series of interesting medical periodicals which finally came together in the currently appearing *California Medicine*. (Some of the exciting early medical adventures in California are depicted with vivid skill in the fine frescoes which Bernard Zakheim painted on the walls of Toland Hall in the University of California hospital in San Francisco. These were unfortunately covered with wallpaper, but have recently been recovered and are available again for stimulating contemplation.)

George Groh has given an exciting account of a difficult and dangerous era for sick people and physicians, and he deserves warm commendation for the skill with which he has depicted the medical hazards and difficulties of the Gold Rush.

DR. CHAUNCEY D. LEAKE

Cover vignette by Mallette Dean



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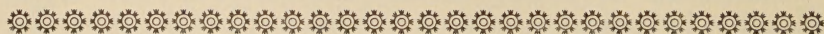
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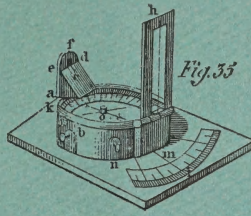
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